United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

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DH/1538
9 December 1993

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- ACABQ, in report to Fifth Committee, recommends overall regular budget spending of $2.56 billion for 1994-1995 biennium, reflecting reduction of $186 million from Secretary-General's proposal; recommends lifting of recruitment freeze because of expanding United Nations duties.

- General Assembly President announces lifting of oil embargo against South Africa following first meeting of country's Transitional Executive Council on Tuesday.

- Disarmament Commission decides to hold 1994 substantive session in New York from 18 April to 9 May; to address process of nuclear disarmament, role of science and technology in disarmament, and international arms transfers.

- Third Committee approves draft resolution strongly condemning human rights violations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), recognizing that Serbs bear main responsibility for them.

- UNESCO World Education Report shows steady reduction in global illiteracy; Director-General says progress results from alliance created at 1990 World Conference on Education and recognition that education is crucial for development.

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The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) has recommended an overall regular budget expenditure of $2.56 billion for the biennium 1994-1995, a reduction of more than $186.47 million from the Secretary-General's proposal. In its report, presented to the Fifth Committee (Advisory and Budgetary) yesterday, the Advisory Committee also recommends that the recruitment freeze, in place since February 1992, be lifted because of expanding United Nations responsibilities.

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United Nations Controller Yukio Takasu told the Committee that the Secretary-General had taken into account priorities adopted by the General Assembly in the preparation of his proposed budget. He said too that the Secretary-General intended to lift the recruitment freeze when his proposed 1994-1995 programme budget was approved.

Speakers responding to the report reflected Member States' different priorities. Pakistan said that the expansion of United Nations peace-keeping and related activities should not be at the expense of social and economic tasks. Ethiopia said that the economic recovery of Africa and environmental preservation were essential budget priorities. Its representative favoured the strengthening of allocations for the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia said that increased preventive diplomacy and peace-keeping justified the strengthening of the Department of Peace-keeping Operations.

* * *

General Assembly President S.R. Insanally (Guyana) today announced the lifting of the oil embargo on the supply of petroleum and petroleum products to South Africa, and on investment in the petroleum industry there. The Assembly, by resolution A/48/1 of 8 October, had decided that the embargo would cease to have effect once South Africa's Transitional Executive Council had become operational, in view of constitutional and other developments there.

Mr. Insanally told the Assembly that he had been informed by the Special Committee on Apartheid and the Intergovernmental Group to Monitor the Supply and Shipping of Oil and Petroleum Products to South Africa that the country's Transitional Executive Council was now operational. He had also been informed by South Africa's Permanent Representative to the United Nations that the Council had met on Tuesday.

Today's statement marks the end of all General Assembly sanctions against South Africa. Those measures were first imposed against the country in 1962 and were expanded over the years as the international community sought ways to end the system of apartheid. In December 1991, following the repeal or revision of the major racial segregation and security laws, the Assembly lifted the academic, scientific and cultural boycott of the country. On 8 October this year economic sanctions were lifted.

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The Disarmament Commission today approved the provisional agenda for its 1994 substantive session, to be held in New York from 18 April to 9 May. The Commission agreed to address the following three items during the session: the process of nuclear disarmament in the framework of international peace and security, with the objective of the elimination of nuclear weapons; the role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament; and international arms transfers.

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The decision on the provisional agenda was taken after the Commission held an extended discussion on the appropriateness of taking up the new item on international arms transfers, as recommended by the First Committee (Disarmament and International Security).

* * *

The Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) yesterday approved a draft resolution by which the General Assembly would condemn in the strongest terms human rights violations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), recognizing that the Serbs bore primary responsibility for those violations. The draft, which was approved without a vote, would have the Assembly condemn killings, torture, rape, disappearances, detentions and other acts of violence, mostly connected to "ethnic cleansing". It would urge that that practice be ended immediately, and that the authorities of the Federal Republic use their influence to reverse its effects. Those authorities would also be urged to respect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the ethnic Albanians of Kosovo.

By the draft, the international community would be urged to provide information relating to violators of international humanitarian law to the International Tribunal investigating those crimes. All parties would be urged to immediately notify the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) of the locations of all camps, prisons and other places of detention and grant access to them.

* * *

There has been a continuing reduction in the number of illiterate people in the world, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Presenting UNESCO's World Education Report earlier this week, Director-General Federico Mayor said the reduction showed the positive results of "the great alliance" established during the World Conference on Education which took place in Thailand in 1990. It also showed the political will of those countries which had realized that the education of their citizens was "the only door leading to endogenous development".

However, Mr. Mayor continued, the report also contained exceptions to the good news, one of them being the "deep wound" which Africa represented in the overall positive picture. Increasingly, educational disparities within the South represented the basic obstacle to overcoming what remained of its knowledge gap with the North. He suggested that those disparities were a disturbing signal of profound change in global economic, social and cultural relations. In addition to Africa, south Asia and the Arab States also had rising levels of adult illiteracy. Regarding developed countries, the report drew attention to the desperate situation in some state education systems, where conditions in city schools might include drug abuse, violence, gangs, policemen in the hallways, intimidated teachers and terrified pupils.

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United Nations

Daily Highlights

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10 December 1993

FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General, addressing General Assembly on International Human Rights Day, says Universal Declaration of Human Rights has proved its universal character in last 45 years; stresses importance of implementing Plan of Action adopted in Vienna in June.

+ Secretary-General expresses alarm at murder of FMLN leader Mario López in El Salvador yesterday; notes that killing occurred one day after creation of joint mechanism to investigate politically motivated illegal armed groups in country.

+ UNICEF Executive Director deplores deliberate attacks on relief workers in former Yugoslavia; says they flagrantly violate international agreements requiring protection of children in armed conflicts.

+ United Nations appeals for $84 million in emergency humanitarian aid for Zaire to meet needs of internally displaced people and the destitute in Kinshasa until June 1994.

+ General Assembly, by recorded vote yesterday of 144 in favour to 1 against (Turkey), with 11 abstentions, calls on all States to ratify or accede to 1982 Law of the Sea Convention as soon as possible.

+ Second Committee approves draft resolution by which General Assembly would urge States and organizations to continue to aid rehabilitation of Somalia.

* * *

In the course of 45 years, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights had proved its true, universal character, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said this morning, addressing a ceremony in the General Assembly to mark International Human Rights Day and the 45th anniversary of the Declaration. "Today, in every part of the world, the Universal Declaration is held out as a common standard for all peoples," he said. The World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna in June, had reaffirmed the solemn commitment of all States to fulfill their obligations to protect human rights in accordance with

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the United Nations Charter, he continued. But implementing the Plan of Action produced by the Conference would take sustained, concerted effort.

The Secretary-General honoured the winners of the 1993 Human Rights Awards for extraordinary achievement in the protection and promotion of human rights. The winners are: Dr. Erica-Irene Daes of Greece, Chairman/Rapporteur of the United Nations Working Group on Indigenous Populations; James P. Grant of the United States, national and Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); the Geneva-based International Commission of Jurists; the medical personnel of the Central Hospital of Sarajevo; Ganesh Man Singh, the Supreme Leader of the Nepali Congress; Dr. Sonia Picado Sotela of Costa Rica, Vice-President of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and Executive Director of the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights; The Sudanese Women's Union; Father Julio Tumiri Javier, founder and President of the Permanent Assembly of Human Rights of Bolivia, and Hassib Ben Ammar of Tunisia, President of the Arab Institute for Human Rights.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today expressed alarm at the murder in El Salvador yesterday of Mario López, a leader of the Frente Farabundo Marti para la Liberacion Nacional (FMLN). In a statement issued by a United Nations spokesman, the Secretary-General noted that Mr. López had been murdered one day after the establishment of a joint mechanism for the investigation of politically motivated illegal armed groups in El Salvador, and that he had been a member of the FMLN's political committee.

The Secretary-General expressed the hope that the incident would be investigated thoroughly and rapidly, adding that the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) would assist in the investigation in accordance with its mandate.

* * *

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Executive Director James P. Grant today deplored deliberate attacks on relief workers in the former Yugoslavia, describing them as flagrant violations of international agreements requiring the protection of children in armed conflicts. "By deliberately targeting UNICEF relief workers clearly recognizable as carrying humanitarian supplies for children, those accountable show cowardice and callousness," he said. "Every time a relief worker is shot at to prevent the delivery of assistance, both the worker and the children are the victims."

A UNICEF truck transporting criticially needed food for children to health centres in Sarajevo was attacked yesterday when it broke down. A UNICEF car, on its way to rescue the driver, then came under heavy sniper fire as it neared the disabled truck. The occupants of both vehicles were later rescued by the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). Meanwhile, a health centre in Sarajevo was hit by mortar fire yesterday. Its administrator, Dr. Galib Pleho, who worked closely with UNICEF, and four other persons were killed, while 11 were wounded. Those incidents come less than

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two weeks after a UNICEF relief worker, Selma Slipioevic, was shot in the back by a sniper as she went to aid a wounded woman in east Mostar.

* * *

The United Nations today launched an appeal for $84.2 million in emergency humanitarian assistance for Zaire to cover, until June 1994, the most urgent needs of the country's internally displaced people and the destitute in its capital, Kinshasa. Among the requirements covered by the appeal are: safe blood transfusions to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS; emergency food assistance; nutritional rehabilitation and emergency health care for children, and "food-for-work" programmes.

Over the past three years, the general economic and social situation in Zaire has deteriorated sharply. Violent inter-ethnic conflicts have erupted in different parts of the country resulting in large numbers of internally displaced people. The appeal focuses on the plight of the displaced Kasai population who were living in the Shaba province, and those displaced in North Kivu. The exodus from rural areas to Kinshasa has swelled its population to 4.5 million, many of whom are jobless and the appeal also addresses some of their needs.

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The General Assembly yesterday called on all States to consider ratifying or acceding to the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea as soon as possible. Adopting a resolution on the subject by a recorded vote of 144 in favour to 1 against (Turkey), with 11 abstentions, the Assembly called on States to observe the provisions of the Convention when enacting national legislation and to strengthen cooperation in the conservation and management of living marine resources. The Assembly took that action as it concluded its consideration of the Law of the Sea.

Also yesterday, the Assembly decided to establish an Ad Hoc Committee to elaborate an international convention dealing with the safety and security of UN and associated personnel, with particular reference to responsibility for attacks on them. It took that action by adopting, without a vote, a resolution on the question of responsibility for attacks on United Nations and associated personnel. It was one of nine resolutions and five decisions adopted without a vote by the Assembly, which had been recommended by the Sixth Committee (Legal).

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The Second Committee (Economic and Financial) yesterday approved a draft resolution by which the General Assembly would urge all States and organizations to continue to help the Somali people in the rehabilitation of basic social and economic services. They would also be urged to aid institution-building aimed at the restoration of civil administration at the local level in all parts of the country where peace, security and stability prevailed.

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Under another draft resolution approved yesterday, the Assembly would call on the international community to continue to meet the emergency needs of Sudan, including recovery, rehabilitation and capacity-building needs.

The Second Committee also approved three drafts relating to the environment and development. One would have the Assembly urge the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for the Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification to complete its work by June 1994. The second draft would ask the Secretary-General to ensure that the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development was widely disseminated by the UN system, and that its principles were incorporated in the Organization's programmes and processes. The third would have the Assembly discontinue reports on the Environmental Perspective to the Year 2000 and Beyond and on the World Commission on Environment and Development.

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Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Third Committee working group on human rights reaches consensus on draft resolution concerning proposed establishment of United Nations high commissioner for human rights.

+ Security Council, in note issued on Friday, says sanctions imposed against Libya in connection with bombings of Pan Am and UTA planes will not be modified at present time.

+ United Nations receives total of $65 million in assessed contributions from 28 States this month; outstanding contributions now total $1.6 billion.

+ General Assembly reaffirms sovereignty of the Comoros over island of Mayotte; urges France to accelerate negotiations with the Comoros to ensure prompt return of island to that country.

* * *

Consensus has been reached on a draft resolution concerning the proposed establishment of a United Nations high commissioner for human rights, according to the Chairman of the working group discussing that issue in the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural). He announced that the working group, established on 12 November to consider the proposed high commissioner, as well as other aspects of the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the World Conference on Human Rights, would issue a report containing the consensus text this week.

Also with regard to human rights, the Third Committee will take up a new sub-item entitled "Comprehensive implementation and follow-up to the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action". This year the Committee has discussed a new item on the rights of children who are victims of especially difficult circumstances, including armed conflicts, and it will continue that discussion next year. It will also examine further the implementation of human rights instruments, alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and reports of the special rapporteurs and representatives dealing with this issue.

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After informal consultations by the Security Council on Friday, the President of the Council issued a statement saying that the sanctions imposed against Libya by resolution 748 (1992) would remain unchanged. The measures, which were imposed in connection with the bombings of Pan Am flight 103 and UTA flight 772, are reconsidered every 120 days or sooner.

The President said that after hearing all the opinions expressed in the course of consultations, he had concluded that there was no agreement that the necessary conditions existed for modifications of the measures.

* * *

Since the beginning of December, 28 States have paid some $65 million in assessed contributions to the regular and peace-keeping budgets of the United Nations, a spokesman for the Organization said today. Outstanding assessed contributions from Member States now total around $1.6 billion.

Fourteen States -- Algeria, Australia, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, Finland, Ghana, Ireland, Micronesia, Namibia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden and the United Kingdom -- were fully paid up on all accounts, the spokesman said. He noted that Canada still owed $183, but added that it consistently paid its assessments in full and on time, and could be considered to have paid in full on the assumption that the question of the outstanding amount would soon settled.

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The General Assembly this morning reaffirmed the sovereignty of the Comoros over the island of Mayotte. By a vote of 91 in favour to 2 against (France, Monaco) with 36 abstentions, it urged France to accelerate its negotiations with the Comoros to ensure the effective and prompt return of the island to that country. The Assembly invited France to honour the commitments it entered into prior to the 22 December 1974 referendum on self-determination of the Comoro archipelago, concerning respect for the unity and territorial integrity of the Comoros.

Introducing the text, the representative of the Comoros said Mayotte was an integral part of his country, which had, by referendum, expressed its desire for independence in 1974. France's action, in considering the referendum results in Mayotte in contrast to the overall vote, ignored the principle of the indivisibility of colonial entities, thus violating the Declaration on decolonization. The representative of France said he regretted that the question of Mayotte, which was under French sovereignty, was again being considered by the Assembly. The people of Mayotte had clearly expressed their desire to remain a part of the French Republic. However, he added that dialogue with the Comoros should contribute to a solution of the problem.

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Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- In report on UNAVEM II, Secretary-General tells Security Council he will proceed with planning to extend Organization's capability to support comprehensive settlement of conflict in Angola.

- Secretary-General, in report to Security Council, recommends that UNOMIL continue its work, though timetable for Liberian elections will probably not be met; says transitional government could be formed soon and elections could be held in first half of 1994.

- General Assembly, in resolution adopted without vote, emphasizes leadership role of Secretary-General, along with the Emergency Relief Coordinator, in coordinating responses to humanitarian emergencies.

- Japan announces contribution of $16.5 million for UNRWA Peace Implementation Programme; described as first step in Japan's promised $200 million programme to aid Palestinians over next two years.

- Special Commission on Iraqi disarmament says its Chemical Destruction Group has completed large-scale destruction of Iraq's stock of mustard-agent-filled artillery shells; destruction of chemical agents expected to be completed by mid-1994.

- United Nations Compensation Commission, reviewing claims resulting from Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, begins final stages of examination of claims relating to death and serious personal injury; Governing Council to assess payments to be made from Compensation Fund.

* * *

In a report on the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II) dated 3 December, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali told the Security Council that he would proceed with contingency planning to enable the Organization to contribute effectively to a comprehensive settlement of the conflict in Angola. If negotiations in Lusaka between the Angolan Government

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and the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) resulted in a sustainable cease-fire, the United Nations would immediately be called upon to deploy an additional contingent of military and police observers, as well as some other units. The expanded tasks that might have to be performed would would also eventually require a substantial presence of United Nations troop contingents there. However, he stressed, there was "no substitute for the genuine commitment of the Angolans themselves to peace and reconciliation".

The Secretary-General said it remained important to continue and even intensify humanitarian activities throughout Angola while the political negotiations in Lusaka continued. Those activities could contribute not only to the well-being of the population, but also to the maintenance of a climate favourable to a peaceful settlement. He appealed to all the parties concerned to facilitate the effective provision of such assistance.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has recommended that the United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL) continue to implement its mandate, even though the election timetable established by the Cotonou Peace Agreement will probably not be met. When UNOMIL was created in September, the Security Council stipulated that its continuation beyond 16 December would depend on the progress made towards implementing the Agreement. In a report to the Council dated 13 December, the Secretary-General said that the original timetable for implementation had been "highly ambitious". Disarmament was to have begun within 30 days of the Agreement's signing last July, while elections were to have been held within seven months. Meanwhile, the joint peace-keeping mission involving UNOMIL and the Military Observer Group (ECOMOG) of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) had been a complex undertaking.

The Secretary-General went on to say that disarmament would probably begin shortly, that a transitional government would soon be formed, and that elections could be held in the first half of next year. He stressed that the fundamental prerequisite for peace was that the leaders and people of Liberia faithfully implement the Cotonou Agreement. He also appealed to the international community to respond generously to the inter-agency appeal for humanitarian assistance to Liberia, to be issued later this month, to help the important relief and rehabilitation work being undertaken there.

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The General Assembly today adopted a resolution emphasizing the leadership role of the Secretary-General, along with the Emergency Relief Coordinator, in coordinating a timely response to humanitarian emergencies. On an exceptional basis, and pending a final decision to be taken by the Economic and Social Council at its 1994 session, the Assembly authorized the Coordinator to draw from the interest earned by the Central Emergency Revolving Fund, to enhance rapid response coordination where insufficient capacity existed at the field level.

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Acting without a vote on a draft introduced by Canada, the Assembly recognized the need to increase the resources available to the Fund and invited additional contributions from potential donors. It asked the Secretary-General to continue strengthening the consolidated appeals process and called upon States to respond quickly and generously to such appeals. It also stressed that the Inter-Agency Standing Committee should serve as the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination.

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Japan has announced a contribution of $16.5 million for projects in the Peace Implementation Programme of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), "to improve living conditions for the Palestinian people, particularly housing in the occupied territory". Announcing the contribution today, the Japanese Permanent Representative to the United Nations Office in Vienna described it as the first step in implementing Japan's $200 million programme of assistance to Palestinians over the next two years, as pledged by Prime Minister Hosokawa at the United Nations General Assembly in September.

UNRWA launched its Peace Implementation Programme on 6 October and has already identified nearly 100 short-term projects worth some $100 million in the West Bank and Gaza Strip which could be implemented during the initial phase of the transition period. The Programme also includes projects to benefit Palestine refugees living in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

Meanwhile, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali yesterday received a written request from Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), for United Nations assistance in establishing a Palestinian Police Academy in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

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The Special Commission on the disarmament of Iraq said yesterday that its Chemical Destruction Group had completed the large-scale destruction of the country's stock of 155mm artillery shells filled with mustard agent. Between its inception in June 1992 and last Sunday, the Group had destroyed more than 12,000 such munitions at the Muthanna site. A few of those artillery rounds remaining at Muthanna were in such poor condition that they could not be destroyed in the usual manner of venting and draining. The Special Commission said that once a suitable alternative method had been found, the destruction of the shells would continue.

Chemical destruction activities will now focus on the destruction of the remaining agent (essentially tabun and mustard) and precursor chemicals, according to the Special Commission. It is envisaged that destruction and cleaning up activities will be completed by mid-1994, permitting the Chemical Destruction Group to withdraw from Iraq.

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The United Nations Compensation Commission (UNCC), which reviews compensation claims resulting from Iraq's invasion and occupation of Kuwait, today began the final stages of its examination of claims relating to death and serious personal injury. Based in Geneva, the UNCC is a subsidiary organ of the Security Council and has the same membership composition. The panel will have 120 days in which to present to the Commission's Governing Council its recommendations on the claimants' entitlements. The Governing Council is expected to be in a position to act on those recommendations by April 1994 and to order appropriate payments to be made to the claimants' Governments from the Compensation Fund.

In February next year, panels will begin work on two other categories of claims, namely those relating to individuals who left Kuwait or Iraq as a result of the invasion, and compensation claims for individual losses of up to $100,000. The awards issued are expected to go to tens of thousands of claimants from the 78 countries that have filed claims.

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Daily Highlights

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15 December 1993

WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council extends UNFICYP mandate until 15 June 1994, noting that present circumstances in Cyprus do not allow for changes in Force's structure and strength; says it will undertake thorough review of situation there, including future role of United Nations.

+ Stressing importance of resolving conflict in Angola, Security Council extends mandate of UNAVEM II until 16 March 1994; decides not to impose additional measures against UNITA at present in view of current direct talks between parties.

+ General Assembly, by 155 votes in favour to 3 against (Iran, Lebanon, Syria), with 1 abstention (Libya), expresses support for Israel-PLO Declaration of Principles and Israel-Jordan Agreement on Common Agenda; urges parties to implement agreements and stress need for rapid progress in Arab-Israeli talks.

+ Secretary-General, at meeting yesterday with Director of ONUSAL Human Rights Division, expresses concern over recent violence in El Salvador and possible impact on electoral process there.

+ Following two-day meeting in Paris, Friends of Haiti declare Governors Island Agreement only viable framework to end Haitian crisis; says if military authorities fail to fulfill obligations under Agreement, Security Council should consider additional sanctions.

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The Security Council today decided to extend the mandate of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) until 15 June 1994. The Council noted that the Secretary-General had recently reported that present circumstances did not allow for any change in UNFICYP's structure and strength and asked him to keep those matters under constant review with a view to the possible further restructuring of the Force.

In unanimously adopting resolution 889 (1993), the Council called on the military authorities on both sides in Cyprus to ensure that no incidents

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occurred along the buffer zone and to fully cooperate with UNFICYP. It once again urged all concerned to commit themselves to reducing the number of foreign troops and defence spending in the Republic of Cyprus to help restore confidence between the parties, and as a first step towards the withdrawal of non-Cypriot forces as set out in the Secretary-General's Set of Ideas for an overall framework agreement. The Council also urged the leaders of both sides to promote tolerance and reconciliation between the two communities.

The Council reaffirmed that the status quo was unacceptable, and encouraged the Secretary-General to pursue his mission of good offices on the basis of the Set of Ideas and the package of confidence-building measures relating to Varosha and Nicosia International Airport. It welcomed the Secretary-General's decision to resume intensive contacts with both sides and with others concerned and to focus on achieving an agreement on the package, to facilitate the process towards an overall settlement. It also welcomed the Turkish Government's declared support for the package, and said it would welcome a statement of support by the Government of Greece. The Council said it would undertake, on the basis of a report to be submitted by the Secretary-General by the end of February, a thorough review of the situation, including the future role of the United Nations, and, if necessary, consider alternative ways to promote implementation of its resolutions on Cyprus.

* * *

Stressing the importance it placed on a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Angola, the Security Council today decided to extend the mandate of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II) until 16 March 1994. By unanimously adopting resolution 890 (1993), the Council also decided, in view of the direct negotiations underway between the parties in Lusaka, not to impose at present the additional measures against the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) outlined in resolution 864 (1993). However, it reiterated its readiness to consider at any time steps to impose such additional measures or to review those in effect.

The Council reaffirmed the importance of the role played by the Secretary-General, his Special Representative and UNAVEM II in efforts to reinstate the peace process and the full implementation of the "Accordos de Paz", the agreement under which elections were held in the country last year. The Council called upon both parties to honour the commitments they had already made at the talks in Lusaka and urged them to exercise maximum restraint and stop immediately all military actions, in order to prevent further suffering on the part of the civilian population and further damage to Angola's economy.

The Council requested the Secretary-General to inform it as soon as an effective cease-fire was established, and in any case by 1 Feburary 1994 on progress made in the Lusaka talks. It reiterated its readiness, if significant progress was made in the peace process, to consider promptly any recommendation by the Secretary-General with regard to augmenting UNAVEM II's existing capacity. The Council also welcomed the Secretary-General's actions to implement the emergency humanitarian assistance plan, commended those who had already contributed to relief efforts and strongly appealed for rapid further assistance to meet Angola's growing humanitarian needs.

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The General Assembly has expressed its full support for the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements signed by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), and for the Agreement between Israel and Jordan on the Common Agenda. By a vote yesterday of 155 in favour to 3 against (Iran, Lebanon, Syria) with 1 abstention (Libya), it urged all parties to implement those agreements and stressed the need for rapid progress in Arab-Israeli negotiations. The Assembly urged Member States to provide economic assistance to the Palestinian people during the interim period, and to States in the region. It also welcomed the creation of the high-level United Nations task force to support Palestinian economic and social development.

In another resolution, adopted by a vote of 141 in favour to 1 against (Israel) with 11 abstentions, the Assembly determined that Israel's decision to impose its laws and administration on Jerusalem was illegal and invalid. It deplored the transfer by some States of diplomatic missions to Jerusalem, in violation of Security Council resolution 478 (1980), and once more called on them to abide by the provisions of relevant United Nations resolutions.

In a third resolution, adopted by a vote of 65 in favour to 2 against (Israel, United States) with 83 abstentions, the Assembly emphasized its decision that Israel rescind the illegal imposition of its laws and administration on the occupied Syrian Golan, as well as its 1991 decision annexing the occupied Syrian Golan. The Assembly declared the occupation and de facto annexation of the Syrian Golan a continuing threat to peace and security in the region and once more demanded Israel's withdrawal. It also called on the international community to urge Israel to withdraw from the occupied Syrian Golan and from other Arab territories, for the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has expressed concern over recent violent incidents in El Salvador and their possible impact on the electoral process there. He discussed those incidents and the human rights situation in the country during a meeting yesterday with Diego García-Sayán, Director of the Human Rights Division of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL). Iqbal Riza, Under-Secretary-General for Peace-Keeping Operations and former Chief of ONUSAL, was also present at the meeting.

The Secretary-General reiterated the need for the consolidation of the achievements of the Peace Accords and noted the efforts of his Special Representative in El Salvador, Augusto Ramirez-Ocampo, according to a United Nations spokesman. He asked Mr. García-Sayán to continue monitoring the human rights situation in the country, and expressed his support for the Joint Group set up last week to investigate illegal armed groups there.

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The process defined by the Governors Island Agreement constitutes the only viable framework for Haiti to emerge from its crisis, according to a Statement of Conclusions issued by the Friends of the Secretary-General on the question of Haiti after a two-day meeting in Paris this week. The group, consisting of Canada, France, the United States and Venezuela, declared that the Agreement offered the only process by which the country could establish a State under the rule of law guaranteeing freedom, security and human rights for all.

During the meeting, the Friends met with Prime Minister Robert Malval, who briefed them on his proposal for a national conference. They concluded that such a conference offered a practical way to address the situation in Haiti. It was the task of the Haitian parties, the Group declared, to work out the procedures and political arrangements required to bring about compliance by both sides with the Governors Island Agreement and the broader objective of national reconciliation.

The Friends said they recognized that the failure of the Security Council sanctions against Haiti was not based solely on the failure of the military authorities to fulfill their commitments. Accordingly, should the Haitian military in good faith take all necessary measures to bring about fulfillment of the Agreement, the sanctions should be suspended regardless of the actions of other parties. If the military failed to comply with their obligations, the Security Council should consider additional measures, including extending the embargo currently applied by the Organization of American States (OAS), applying further sanctions against the main supporters of the military and banning non-commercial flights into and out of Haiti.

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16 December 1993

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Secretary-General welcomes successful conclusion of Uruguay Round of GATT talks as major contribution to strengthening of international trade relations; says United Nations is ready to cooperate fully with proposed World Trade Organization.

- Third Committee approves draft resolution on post of United Nations high commissoner for human rights; that individual, appointed as Under-Secretary-General, would be charged with helping prevent human rights violations throughout world.

- Department of Humanitarian Affairs launches inter-agency appeal for $284 million in emergency humanitarian aid for Liberia through December 1994; seeks to facilitate implementation of Cotonou Peace Agreement.

- Secretary-General formally receives reports on economic benefits and ramifications for communities in Cyprus of proposed confidence-building measures regarding Varosha and Nicosia International Airport.

- Special Commission completes second survey in Iraq to plot gamma radiation emissions; seeks to verify that elements identified and locations are consistent with Iraq's declaration of its nuclear programme

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has warmly welcomed the successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations. According to a United Nations spokesman, the Secretary-General described the agreement as a major contribution to the strengthening of the multilateral trading system and, thus, to the predictability and security of international trade relations. He said it should bring renewed growth to the world economy, and emphasized the United Nations' readiness to cooperate fully with the proposed World Trade Organization "for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples".

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Mr. Boutros-Ghali congratulated the Governments participating in the Round for demonstrating political will and statesmanship and praised the role played by the Director-General of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). He said that in a negotiating process of such immense scope and complexity the resulting package could never completely satisfy all the parties, but that this was an outcome to which all could rally. It was to be hoped that appropriate action would be taken to enable countries, especially developing countries and those in transition to a market economy, to take full advantage of the gains achieved and to benefit in areas where they might be disadvantaged.

* * *

The General Assembly would create the post of United Nations high commissoner for human rights under the terms of a draft resolution approved this morning by the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural). According to the text, the high commissioner would possess a high moral standing as well as the understanding of diverse cultures necessary for impartial, objective, non-selective and effective performance.

The Secretary-General would appoint the high commissioner, to be approved by the Assembly, to serve a four-year term at the rank of Under-Secretary-General. That individual would be charged with playing an active role in preventing human rights violations throughout the world, and engaging in a dialogue with all Governments with a view to securing respect for human rights. The Secretary-General would be requested to provide appropriate staff for the fulfillment of the high commissioner's mandate, without diverting resources from development programmes and activities.

While the establishment of a high commissioner for human rights has been discussed for decades, it was formally brought to the attention of the General Assembly by the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action adopted at the World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna in June of this year. The Declaration recommended that the Assembly begin priority consideration of the issue at this session.

* * *

The Department of Humanitarian Affairs today launched an inter-agency appeal for $284 million in emergency humanitarian assistance for Liberia through December 1994. It said it was essential to maintain the existing humanitarian programme in Liberia not only for the sake of the population affected by the conflict there, but also to create a climate conducive to implementation of the Cotonou Peace Agreement. The Agreement offered a chance to resolve the country's political and military crisis and required an expansion in certain humanitarian activities, particularly those dealing with the return of refugees, the resettlement of displaced persons, and the demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants.

The international community had responded generously to Liberia's food aid needs during a series of appeals since 1990, but there had been serious shortfalls in other sectors, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs noted. However, despite those shortfalls and problems of access and security, the

emergency relief programme had averted a potential major tragedy. It was now important to shift the emphasis from emergency relief to reconstruction and rehabilitation.

* * *

As part of his ongoing efforts to resolve the situation in Cyprus, the Secretary-General yesterday formally received the reports of the two teams of experts on the economic benefits and ramifications of his proposed package of the confidence-building measures relating to the Varosha and Nicosia International Airport. The Secretary-General had informed the Security Council in October of his decision to send the two teams to Cyprus to make an assessment of the effects of the package so that they were fully understood by all concerned.

The reports are to be made available to the leaders of both sides of the Cyprus conflict. The team of economic experts concluded that the implementation of the package would yield significant economic benefits to both communities. The benefits would be greater for the Turkish Cypriot side because of the relative size of its economy and their impact in alleviating the serious obstacles currently confronting the Turkish Cypriot economy. The team of experts on Nicosia Airport confirmed the feasibility of reopening it in accordance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) standards at a relatively modest cost of $36 million, and said the task could be completed within 18 months.

Addressing a press conference at Headquarters today, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Cyprus, Joe Clark, said the reports illustrated that there were practical ways to solve whatever problems arose with the proposed measures, if there was the political will to make the package of ideas work.

* * *

The Special Commission on the disarmament of Iraq has completed a second survey to plot the locations of emmissions of gamma radiation in that country, particularly those above normal local background levels. The Commission was seeking more detailed information on emissions from certain areas surveyed in September and to investigate new areas. Five new sites were surveyed, bringing the total so far to seven. The sites were located in and around Baghdad and in central and north western Iraq.

The survey, which was conducted with helicopter-mounted sensors, was undertaken in order to verify that the radio-elements identified and their locations were fully consistent with Iraq's declaration of its nuclear programme. Future missions will be able to detect any changes in radiation levels. Major changes in those levels might indicate movements of radioactive materials which would be subject to monitoring and verification under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) plan to ensure Iraq's compliance with its obligations not to reacquire a nuclear capability.

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United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1544
17 December 1993

FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General leaves New York for visit to Tokyo, Seoul, Pyongyang and Beijing; to return by 29 December.

+ Croat and Serb representatives in Croatia sign Christmas Truce Agreement, mediated by UNPROFOR Force Commander, to last from 23 December till 15 January; agree to confidence-building measures and negotiations on "general and lasting" cease-fire.

+ Secretary-General welcomes joint Declaration on Northern Ireland by Irish and British Prime Ministers; hopes for immediate end to violence and lasting political settlement acceptable to all parties.

+ General Assembly, adopting 45 resolutions recommended by First Committee, calls for moratorium on export of anti-personnel land mines; asks Conference on Disarmament to begin talks on nuclear-test-ban treaty.

+ Secretary-General recommends that Security Council extend UNOMUR mandate for six months, saying Mission has promoted stability and confidence in Uganda and Rwanda.

+ Fifth Committee approves draft by which General Assembly would appropriate almost $9 million for UNOMSA for 1 January to 31 July 1994.

+ UNHCR appoints Michel Moussali, Swiss national, as Special Envoy for Burundi emergency; Department of Humanitarian Affairs allocates $5 million from Emergency Revolving Fund to WFP to aid Burundi refugees.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today left New York for Tokyo, for an official visit to Japan that is expected to last until 22 December. He will then visit Seoul, capital of the Republic of Korea, "for a couple of days", according to a United Nations spokesman. The Secretary-General will then travel by road to Pyongyang, and will stay in the Democratic People's

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Republic of Korea from 24 to 26 December. He will also spend a day in Beijing, before returning to New York no later than 29 December.

Addressing correspondents yesterday, the Secretary-General described his visit to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as a mission of goodwill in the framework of preventive diplomacy. "We want to know what the facts are, to listen to the different actors and then, if there is anything I can offer to the Member States and the Security Council, I will do it", he said. "But I have no mandate and I will not do any kind of mediation."

* * *

Croat and Serb representatives in Croatia today signed a Christmas Truce Agreement mediated by the General Jean Cot, Force Commander of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). The two parties undertook to cease all armed hostilities on all existing confrontation lines from midnight on 23 December until midnight on 15 January 1994. They also undertook to implement certain confidence-building measures with effect from the signing of the Agreement.

According to the text of the Agreement, the parties undertook to open negotiations as soon as the truce takes effect on a "general and lasting" cease-fire, with the separation of forces on both sides. Negotiations on this "General Cease-fire Agreement" are to be conducted on the basis of draft texts which they have discussed.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has warmly welcomed the joint Declaration on Northern Ireland which was issued by the Irish and British Prime Ministers on Wednesday, according to a United Nations spokesman. The Secretary-General expressed the hope that a permanent cessation of violence would ensue immediately and that the basis had been laid for achievement of a lasting political settlement acceptable to all the parties.

* * *

The General Assembly yesterday called for a moratorium on the export of anti-personnel land mines, asked the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva to begin negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, and invited States to end the illegal export of conventional weapons. The Assembly took those actions in the course of adopting 45 resolutions recommended by the First Committee (Disarmament and International Security). The resolutions covered a wide range of issues, including regional disarmament, non-proliferation, bilateral disarmament talks, international transfer of arms, outer space and Antarctica.

In a resolution adopted without a vote, the Assembly noted that there were as many as 85 million uncleared land mines throughout the world, and called on States to implement the export moratorium on mines that posed grave dangers to civilian populations. Again acting without a vote, the Assembly

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endorsed a decision taken by the Conference on Disarmament to give its Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear-Test Ban a mandate to negotiate a "universal and internationally and effectively verifiable comprehensive test-ban treaty". The Assembly's action was described by the President, S.R. Insanally (Guyana) as "a truly historic occasion".

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has recommended that the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission Uganda-Rwanda (UNOMUR) be extended for a further period of six months. In a report to the Security Council dated 15 December (S/26878), he recalled that UNOMUR had been established in order to create an atmosphere conducive to a negotiated settlement of the conflict in Rwanda, and to underscore the importance that the international community attached to the maintenance of peace and security in the region. UNOMUR had promoted stability in the area and was also serving as a confidence-building mechanism. That view, he added, appeared to be shared by the Governments of Uganda and Rwanda.

The Secretary-General expressed appreciation to the Government of Uganda for its cooperation, saying that UNOMUR's ability to discharge its mandate effectively would continue to depend on the assistance and cooperation of the Ugandan authorities. He also paid tribute to the military and civilian personnel of UNOMUR for the professionalism with which they had carried out their tasks.

* * *

The Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) yesterday approved a draft decision by which the General Assembly would appropriate almost $9 million for the United Nations Observer Mission in South Africa (UNOMSA) for the period 1 January to 31 July 1994. The decision, which was taken without a vote, was based on reports the Committee received yesterday from the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) on the financing of the Mission.

According to the Secretary-General's report, UNOMSA's activities in early 1994 would focus mainly on elections due to be held on 27 April 1994 in South Africa. The Mission would then be phased out between May and the end of July 1994. The draft decision stated that should UNOMSA be extended or have additional requirements, the Secretary-General should seek the concurrence of the Advisory Committee to make related commitments. He would also be asked to consider efforts to procure the most economical office space and to buy supplies locally for the Mission.

* * *

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Sadako Ogata has appointed Michel Moussali, a Swiss national, as her Special Envoy for the Burundi emergency. Mr. Moussali, a former UNHCR Director of International Protection, will work closely with the Governments of Burundi and host

(more)

countries Rwanda, Tanzania and Zaire to find a solution to the crisis so that Burundi refugees can return home as soon as possible.

In a related development, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs has allocated $5 million from its Central Emergency Revolving Fund to the World Food Programme (WFP) after an urgent request for funds to provide emergency food assistance for refugees from Burundi. WFP has already started a feeding programme that draws on existing food stocks, and the allocation will allow it to make local purchases to meet the needs of some 150,000 displaced persons inside Burundi as well as 600,000 refugees in Rwanda, Tanzania and Zaire.

Last month, the Department of Humanitarian Affairs launched an inter-agency appeal for $9.5 million for humanitarian assistance to those displaced within Burundi. Of that, almost $3 million was for the WFP to provide emergency food assistance. In addition, WFP has prepared a regional emergency operation plan of almost $14 million. The allocation from the Revolving Fund will allow WFP to continue its feeding programme while waiting for contributions from donors.

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United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

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DH/1545
20 December 1993

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General continues visit to Japan, attending dinner hosted by Prime Minister, and meeting earlier with Chairman of Social Democratic Party and Ministers of Foreign Affairs, State and Health and Welfare, amongst others.

+ General Assembly urges Security Council to consider exempting Bosnia and Herzegovina from arms embargo against former Yugoslavia, to allow that country to exercise right of self-defence; meanwhile, leaders of parties in Bosnian conflict are to meet in Geneva tomorrow in first direct session in two weeks; on Sunday, UNPROFOR soldier was shot in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 67th killed in former Yugoslavia.

+ Eighth Convention between European Community and UNRWA, for assistance to Palestine refugees for 1993-1995, signed in Brussels last Friday, providing for $106 million in cash assistance to Agency's education, health and food assistance programmes.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today continued his visit to Japan, concluding a day of high-level meetings with an informal working dinner hosted by Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa. Earlier today, accompanied by Sadako Ogata, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR), he met with Foreign Minister Tautomu Hata. According to a United Nations spokesman, the two main topics discussed were cooperation between Japan and the United Nations, and the Secretary-General's trip to the Republic of Korea and to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Next, Mr. Boutros-Ghali met with the Chairman of the Sccial Democratic Party of Japan, after which the he attended a luncheon at the Foreign Correspondents Club of Japan. He then met with the Japanese Minister of State and Chairman of the Clean Government Party, and later with the Minister of Health and Welfare and Chairman of the Democratic Socialist Party, with whom he discussed Japanese support for the United Nations, including peace-keeping operations in Mozambique and Cambodia, as well as financial support for the Organization.

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Yesterday, the first full day of his visit to Japan, Mr. Boutros-Ghali met with Takehito Nakata, the father of United Nations volunteer Atsuhito Nakata who was killed in Cambodia. The Secretary-General then held a series of meetings with the Vice-Chairman of the Liberal Democratic Party; the Vice-President of the Japan Red Cross; the Chairman of the Boutros Boutros-Ghali Scholarship Fund; the Chairman of the Japan Science Council, and the President and Vice-Presidents of Soka Gakkai International.

Tomorrow, Mr. and Mrs. Boutros-Ghali are scheduled to have an audience with the Emperor and Empress of Japan. On Wednesday, the Secretary-General leaves for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, where he will spend two days before proceding to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

* * *

The General Assembly this morning urged the Security Council to give urgent consideration to exempting Bosnia and Herzegovina from its arms embargo against the former Yugoslavia. The Assembly urged the international community to cooperate with that country in exercising its inherent right of self-defence. By a vote of 109 in favour to none against, with 57 abstentions, the Assembly adopted a resolution which also asked the Council to ensure that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) immediately cease to supply military arms, equipment and services to Bosnian Serb paramilitary units.

The Council was asked to act immediately to close all detention camps in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to close all concentration camps established by the Serbs in Serbia and Montenegro and in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Assembly demanded that the Bosnian Serb party lift the siege of Sarajevo and other "safe areas", as well as of other besieged Bosnian towns. It also demanded that all concerned facilitate the unhindered flow of humanitarian assistance, including water, electricity, fuel and communication.

By other terms of the text, the Assembly would call upon the Security Council to ensure that the proposals contained in the "Geneva peace package" are in conformity with the United Nations Charter, international law, previously adopted resolutions of the Assembly and the Council, and the principles adopted at the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia. It would call for the urgent reconvening of that Conference in order to arrive at just and equitable proposals for lasting peace and would call upon the parties to the conflict to show good faith in their negotiations.

Meanwhile, the leaders of the warring parties in the Bosnian conflict are to meet in Geneva tomorrow. International mediators Thorvald Stoltenberg and Lord David Owen have been in constant communication with all involved, but tomorrow's meeting will be the first direct session in two weeks. A spokesman for the Co-Chairmen said Lord Owen and Mr. Stoltenberg would do their utmost to get a settlement before Christmas, adding that the feeling and the hope was that "the time could be right".

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From Bosnia and Herzegovina it is reported that another soldier serving with the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) has been killed, bringing to 67 the total number who have died while serving in the former Yugoslavia. Corporal Marc Gilbert Orban, a member of the Belgian battalion, was on convoy duty on Sunday afternoon when he was shot by a sniper near Visoko. He was taken to UNPROFOR's infirmary at its headquarters in Kiseljak where he died an hour later.

* * *

The eighth Convention between the European Community and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), for assistance to Palestine refugees for 1993-1995, was signed in Brussels on 17 December. It provides for approximately $106 million in cash assistance to the Agency's education, health and food assistance programmes, an increase of 16 per cent over the previous three-year Convention. The European Community and its member States provide about 43 per cent of UNRWA's budget.

The European Community has also undertaken to contribute a substantial amount of in-kind assistance, as in previous years. The exact amount of such assistance would be established on an annual basis. During 1993, the Community's in-kind contribution was approximately $35 million. Following the signing of the Declaration of Principles by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel on 13 September in Washington, D.C., the European Community pledged approximately $2 million to rehabilitate refugee shelters in the Gaza Strip and West Bank, as well as $195,000 for the implementation of a food storage programme in the West Bank.

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United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

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DH/1546
21 December 1993

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Continuing their visit to Japan, Secretary-General and Mrs. Boutros-Ghali have audience with Emperor and Empress of Japan; Secretary-General meets with former Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone and Defence Minister Kazuo Aichi, amongst others.

+ Secretary-General to convene preliminary meeting between Government of Guatemala and Unidad Revolucionaría Nacional Guatemalteca from 6 to 9 January 1994 in Mexico; meeting follows suspension of peace talks last May.

+ Parties to conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina meet in Geneva today under auspices of Co-Chairmen of International Conference on Former Yugoslavia; to continue discussions tomorrow in Brussels.

+ Security Council last night extended mandate of United Nations Observer Mission Uganda-Rwanda for six months, welcoming substantial results obtained since Mission's inception in June.

+ General Assembly yesterday created post of United Nations High Commissoner for Human Rights; to be Organization's principal official charged with helping prevent human rights violations.

+ Secretary-General calls for global ratification of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; treaty now set to enter into force in March 1994.

* * *

Continuing their visit to Japan, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and Mrs. Boutros-Ghali today were received in audience by their Majesties the Emperor and Empress of Japan. According to a United Nations spokesman, the Secretary-General then attended a luncheon given in his honour by the United Nations Association (UNA) of Japan, after which he was paid a courtesy call by Justice Shigeru Oda of the International Court of Justice.

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For information media—not an official record

Later in the day he received Yohei Kono, President of the Liberal Democratic Party. The Secretary-General then received former Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone, who has agreed to serve as a member of the Advisory Council for the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. The Secretary-General stated his desire that Japan play a greater role in the United Nations, and they discussed the question of a permanent seat for Japan on the Security Council. The Secretary-General then met with Kazuo Aichi, Minister of State for Defence. Concluding the day, the Secretary-General attended a reception hosted by the President of the Upper House of the Diet, Bunbei Hara, and the Speaker of the Lower House, Takako Doi.

Tomorrow the Secretary-General leaves Japan for an official visit to the Republic of Korea.

* * *

Based on consultations with the Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucionaría Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG), Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has decided to convene a preliminary meeting between the parties from 6 to 9 January 1994 in Mexico. A United Nations spokesman said today that the Secretary-General expected the meeting to be an opportunity for both parties to make a determined effort to get the peace process back on track and to offer to the Guatemalan people clear prospects for an early and fair settlement of the 30-year armed conflict in their country.

In October, the Government of Guatemala and URNG asked the Secretary-General to organize a preliminary meeting on modalities for resuming their peace negotiations, which were suspended last May. In the framework of the Secretary-General's good offices, bilateral consultations were held in November and December with the parties at United Nations Headquarters in New York. On that occasion they confirmed their willingness to resume their talks and to show flexibility in devising a negotiating format, taking into account agreements reached and progress already made in the peace process.

* * *

The parties to the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina met in Geneva today under the auspices of the Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, Thorvald Stoltenberg and Lord Owen. On the agenda was the question of additional territory for a Muslim republic, including access to the sea. Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic and Croatian President Franjo Tudjman both participated in the talks. They met separately with the Co-Chairmen and then together.

The spokesman for the Co-Chairmen said that much "quiet diplomacy" and private meetings had gone into preparing for today's meeting and for tomorrow's talks in Brussels, which he said should be seen as a continuation of today's. He said the talks were perceived as part of "a united effort to end this war which has gone on far too long".

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The Security Council last night decided to extend the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission Uganda-Rwanda (UNOMUR) for a period of six months. Welcoming the substantial results obtained by the Mission since its inception in June 1993 and in particular the decrease in clandestine cross-border traffic, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 891 (1993).

By another part of the text, the Council noted that the integration of UNOMUR within the United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) was purely administrative and that it would in no way affect the mandate of UNOMUR. The Council expressed its appreciation to the Government of Uganda for its cooperation and support for UNOMUR and also underlined the importance of a cooperative attitude on the part of the civilian and military authorities in the Mission area.

* * *

The Secretary-General will appoint the High Commissioner, to be approved by the Assembly, to serve a four-year term at the rank of Under-Secretary-General. He or she will coordinate the Organization's human rights activities and supervise the Centre for Human Rights, through which advisory services and assistance would be provided to States upon request.

Adoption of the resolution, heralded by many speakers as a turning point in the history of United Nations action in the human rights arena, was the culmination of a process initiated at the World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna in June.

* * *

In anticipation of the entry into force of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change next March, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today called for global adherence to the treaty and support for its rapid implementation. He said that protecting the climate would require cooperation by all countries and that the Convention offered a framework for such action.

At the June 1992 Rio "Earth Summit", he said, there was an extraordinary display of political commitment as over 150 Heads of State and other senior national representatives signed the newly-finalized treaty. With the threshold of 50 ratifications now met, the Convention would enter into force on 21 March 1994.

"If scientific predictions came true," he continued, "our children and grandchildren will live in a world of higher temperatures and changed climate patterns. Droughts, floods, storms, and other climate and weather extremes may become more frequent. People living in risky or marginal areas would swell the ranks of refugees, and social and political tensions would worsen as competition for water and other scarce resources intensified. This extra pressure would make it even more difficult to solve the kinds of problems and crises that we already face today."

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Mr. Boutros-Ghali stressed that it was necessary to improve scientific and technical understanding of the causes and impact of climate change and of the various options for responding to it. The fundamental aim, he said, was for industrialized and industrializing societies to shift to sustainable patterns of production and consumption that would protect the national and global environment, while improving the well-being of their people.

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United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1547
22 December 1993

WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General concludes visit to Japan and flies to Seoul, Republic of Korea; meets with Foreign Minister and later addresses dinner hosted by United Nations Association of Korea and Korean Council on Foreign Affairs.

+ Citing progress made in Georgia peace process, Secretary-General asks Security Council for contingent authority to deploy up to 50 additional Military Observers with UNOMIG, together with civilian support staff.

+ General Assembly yesterday called for urgent new measures to alleviate external debt burden of developing countries; calls for halt to use of unilateral coercive economic measures by some developed countries; proclaims international Decade of the World's Indigenous People; calls for rapid international assistance for Palestinian people.

+ Launching 1994 State of the World's Children report, UNICEF Executive Director James Grant says war on diseases of childhood is being won; United States President says investing in children is most cost-effective way to advance economies and avert conflicts.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali concluded his visit to Japan today with a press conference at the Japan National Press Club. He and his party then departed for Seoul, Republic of Korea. His first meeting in the capital was with Foreign Minister Han Sung Joo. According to a United Nations spokesman, they had a detailed discussion of the situation on the Korean Peninsula, the current state of negotiations, and the Secretary-General's forthcoming trips to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and China.

The Secretary-General then attended a dinner hosted by the United Nations Association of Korea and the Korean Council on Foreign Affairs. He expressed the hope that one day the two Korean States would be represented in the United Nations as one. A permanent peace in the Korean Peninsula remained a key aim of the international community, he said. When that was achieved, he was

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For information media—not an official record

confident that the Security Council would take steps to dissolve the United Nations Command in Korea, which had been in place since 1950.

Tomorrow, the Secretary-General is scheduled to meet with leaders of the National Assembly.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has requested a contingent authority from the Security Council to deploy up to 50 additional Military Observers with the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG), together with a minimal number of civilian support staff. In a letter to the President of the Council dated 16 December, he said that in his opinion the Memorandum of Understanding signed on 1 December by the parties to the conflict in Georgia manifested encouraging progress towards lasting peace in the area, thus satisfying a requirement outlined by the Council.

The Council on 4 November, in resolution 881 (1993), had decided that the mandate of UNOMIG would not be extended unless the Secretary-General reported substantive progress toward implementing measures aimed at establishing a lasting peace. Mr. Boutros-Ghali said in his letter that UNOMIG, reinforced as he suggested, would be better placed to ascertain the actual conditions on the ground and to plan and prepare for further expansion beyond the 50, should the next round of negotiations, scheduled to begin on 11 January, warrant it.

* * *

The General Assembly yesterday called upon the international community to explore additional urgent measures, including cancellation or reduction, to alleviate the external debt burden of the developing countries. That text, one of 66 proposals taken up at the recommendation of its Second Committee (Economic and Financial), was adopted by a recorded vote of 164 to 1 against (United States).

The Assembly also called upon the international community to adopt measures to eliminate the use by some developed countries of unilateral economic coercive measures against developing countries as a means of forcibly imposing the will of one State on another. The measure was adopted by a vote of 116 in favour to 32 against, with 16 abstentions.

On the recommendation of the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural), the Assembly proclaimed an international Decade of the World's Indigenous People, starting on 10 December 1994. In terms of the draft, the Secretary-General would be requested to establish a Voluntary Fund for the Decade and Governments would be encouraged to establish structures involving indigenous representatives to plan activities for it.

Acting for the first time without a vote on the matter, the Assembly urged States and organizations to extend, as rapidly and as generously as possible, economic and social assistance to the Palestinian people, in order to assist in the development of the West Bank and Gaza. They were asked to

(more)

do so in close cooperation with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and through official Palestinian institutions.

* * *

Speaking at the launch in Washington yesterday of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) 1994 State of the World's Children report, UNICEF Executive Director James Grant said that the war on the diseases of childhood was being won. According to the report, recent years have seen dramatic progress against many of those problems. Measles deaths among young children have already been brought down from 2.5 million a year to less than 1 million. Deaths of children from diarrhoeal diseases have been cut from well over 4 million a year to less than 3 million. Deaths from neonatal tetanus are down from 9 million to just over half a million.

"There are 3 million children in the world today," Mr. Grant said, "who are running and playing normally who would have been crippled by polio were it not for the advances we have seen in these last few years...Given determined political leadership, I have no doubt at all that we can now turn this momentum into a final offensive against some of the oldest, most widespread and most serious threats to the lives, the health and the normal growth of the world's children."

United States President Bill Clinton, launching the report at a ceremony at the White House, stated that his Administration was committed to improving the lives of children in other countries not out of simple charity, but also out of prudence. "Investing in the children of the world can be the most cost-effective way not only to relieve suffering but also to advance economies, to promote self-sufficiency, to promote democracy and to avert future conflicts," he said.

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United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1548
23 December 1993

THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Continuing visit to Republic of Korea, Secretary-General meets with President Kim Young Sam; meets also with Chairman of Foreign Affairs and Unification Committee, National Assembly leaders and Minister of Foreign Affairs.

+ General Assembly President says 48th session of Assembly has seen "happy coincidence of events that auger well for the future", citing examples such as developments in South Africa, Palestine-Israel accords and GATT signing.

+ Security Council last night authorized deployment of up to 50 additional military observers to United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia, to monitor situation and report on efforts to promote political settlement of conflict there.

+ Fifth Committee last night approved $2,6 billion in appropriations for United Nations regular budget for 1994-1995 biennium; also approved drafts on financing of 17 peace-keeping operations in first quarter of 1994.

+ At least 20 nations face serious food shortages in 1994 FAO says in latest analysis of world food situation; 790 million people in developing countries, including 190 million children, said to be chronically undernourished.

* * *

Continuing his official visit to the Republic of Korea (ROK) today, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali met in the afternoon with President Kim Young Sam. According to a United Nations spokesman, they discussed the Secretary-General's forthcoming visit to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), the difficulties between the two countries and the current negotiations between the DPRK and the United States. Mr. Boutros-Ghali said that his trip was on his own initiative, without a mandate, aimed at assisting

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and encouraging the negotiation process. He stressed his belief that failure to resolve the question of the DPRK's nuclear weapon capability could endanger the renewal in 1995 of the Nuclear Non-Profileration Treaty.

Earlier in the day, the Secretary-General met with Chung Jae Moon, the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs and Unification Committee and Secretary-General of the National Assembly, and with other Assembly leaders. He attended a luncheon in his honour hosted by Foreign Minister Han Sung Joo, and later met with United Nations representatives in Korea. They briefed him on their programmes in the ROK, and also those developed jointly with the ROK and DPRK.

Tomorrow, the Secretary-General and his party leave Seoul by car for the DPRK, where he is expected around noon.

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The President of the General Assembly, Samuel R. Insanally (Guyana), summing up the 48th session prior to its suspension, pointed out to the press at Headquarters today that there had been "a happy coincidence of events that auger well for the future" since September. He cited as examples: the progressive developments in South Africa, with the promise of the introduction soon of a democratic, non-racial government; in the Middle East, the Palestine-Israeli accords which held the promise of peace and stability for "that long troubled region"; the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) coming "to some fruition"; Law of the Sea Treaty, with Guyana, as the 60th signatoree enabling it to enter into force next year, and progress towards the signing of a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty.

With respect to upcoming work, he highlighted two priority areas. He said he would be establishing by the end of January the working group to look into the reform of the Security Council, "an idea whose time has come". He also hoped to be involved in the formulation of an agenda for development, once the Secretary-General issued his second report on the subject, perhaps some time in April. He said the Assembly Presidency had been given the role of conducting a wide examination of views of development, to find new ideas that went beyond traditional thinking, to help bring about economic development, "a sine qua non for peace in the world".

* * *

The Security Council last night authorized the phased deployment of up to 50 additional military observers to the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG). The interim mandate of UNOMIG is to maintain contacts with both sides to the conflict and military contingents of the Russian Federation. It is to monitor and report on the situation, particularly in relation to United Nations efforts to promote a political settlement, and to contribute to the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding signed on 1 December by the Georgian and the Abkhaz sides.

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The Council, by unanimously adopting resolution 892 (1993), also noted the Secretary-General's intention to plan for a further expansion of UNOMIG, should the situation on the ground and the course of negotiations warrant it. It expressed its willingness to review the UNOMIG's mandate in the light of the Secretary-General's report due in late January, which should cover the specific activities UNOMIG would undertake, prospects for the mission and anticipated costs.

Also by the resolution, the Council urged the parties to comply fully with their commitments under the Memorandum of Understanding, and especially the commitment not to use force or the threat of force against each other during the negotiating period as set out in the main provisions of the cease-fire agreement of 27 July. It further urged the parties to create conditions for the voluntary safe and speedy return of refugees to their permanent residences and to facilitate humanitarian assistance to all victims of the conflict.

* * *

Appropriations of $2,580,200,200 were approved for the United Nations regular budget for the 1994-1995 biennium by the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) last night. It also approved draft resolutions that would have the Assembly authorize the Secretary-General to commit funds to finance 17 peace-keeping operations up to various dates in the first quarter of 1994.

With estimated income of $477,401,700, net expenditure for the biennium would be $2,112,798,500. Acting without a vote, the Committee approved five draft resolutions contained in its report to the Assembly, by which the Assembly would also appropriate:

-- $100 million for the biennium to establish the Working Capital Fund;
-- $25,099,000 for the International Computing Centre; and
-- $4,000,000 for the International Civilian Mission to Haiti for the period 1 January to 31 March 1994.

The Assembly would set the United Nations 1994 appropriations at $1,234,045,900, and set $1,198,902,550 as the assessment on Member States.

* * *

At least 20 nations in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Europe and the Middle East are suffering from serious food shortages that endanger millions of people, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) says in its latest analysis of the current world food situation. The FAO estimates that there are some 790 million chronically undernourished people in the developing world, including some 190 million children. In addition, some 2 billion people suffer from "hidden hunger" -- diet-related deficiency diseases that can retard mental and physical growth and lead to blindness and other serious disorders.

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The survey says that in 1993, world cereal production -- the basic diet in most nations -- dropped by 4 percent. This contributed to grave regional food shortages, forcing up prices on international markets. To avoid a further drawdown in the 'safety net' that global cereal stocks represent for world food security, the FAO says a minimum increase of 3 per cent in global cereal production is needed in 1994.

FAO Director-General Edouard Saouma says there is plenty of food to feed all of the world's 5.4 billion people, but the problem comes in distributing it to the starving and the malnourished. Wars, civil disturbances and economic chaos have further worsened the situation in eight nations that are already endangered by food shortages.

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United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1549
28 December 1993

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General yesterday ends his four-nation Asian tour, having visited Japan, Republic of Korea (ROK) and Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and China; says he hopes his visit to Korean peninsula contributes to better understanding Governments involved and international community.

+ Concluding first part of current session, General Assembly on Thursday approved appropriations of $2,6 billion for United Nations regular budget for 1994-1995; approved income estimates of $477 million, while net expenditure for biennium would be $2 billion.

+ Annual contributions to UNHCR surpass $1 billion for second year; that level attributed to donor confidence in UNHCR and recognition of growing world-wide refugee problems.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros Ghali yesterday ended his four-nation Asian tour in Beijing. In the course of his 10-day journey, he visited Japan, the Republic of Korea (ROK) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), as well as the People's Republic of China. He said he hoped that his visit to the Korean peninsula would have contributed to a better understanding by the ROK and DPRK Governments and the international community, and that he hoped his initiative would be followed by others.

Following his arrival in Beijing on Sunday, the Secretary-General met with Chan Muhua, Vice-Chairperson of the National People's Congress, who is in charge of arrangements for the Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in Beijing in 1995. The Secretary-General expressed his appreciation that China was hosting the Conference.

The Secretary-General then met with Premier Li Peng. He opened the discussion by reiterating his promise to visit China, a permanent member of the Security Council, each year of his mandate. He thanked the Premier for the important support China had given the United Nations in the recently concluded operation of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), as well as in providing observers currently serving in several peace-keeping operations.

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Speaking at Pyongyang airport on his departure from the DPRK on Sunday, Mr. Boutros-Ghali said that his meetings with the leadership in the DPRK and the ROK had convinced him that both Presidents wish to avoid escalation of present tensions and to solve peacefully the problems that exist between them. Both had also agreed that the goal of reunification should be achieved through a gradual process. "I am, therefore, encouraged to believe that a negotiated solution can be found, though I do not underestimate the difficulties of this after so many years of separation and distrust," he said

Mr. Boutros-Ghali met with the President of the DPRK, Kim Il Sung, on Saturday. According to a United Nations spokesman, they discussed matters related to the reunification of the Korean peninsula and various foreign affairs matters, including the nuclear issue. Reference was also made to the discussions between the DPRK and the United States. The Secretary-General expressed his hope that the outcome of those talks would be positive and constructive.

* * *

Concluding the first part of its current session, the General Assembly on Thursday approved appropriations of $2,560,200,200 for the United Nations regular budget for the 1994-1995 biennium. It took that action by approving 34 reports of its Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary). It approved income estimates of $477,401,700, while net expenditure for the biennium would be $2,112,798,500.

The Assembly also approved, without a vote, five other draft resolutions on the budget, by which it will appropriate: $100 million for the biennium to establish the Working Capital Fund; $25,099,000 for the International Computing Centre; and $4,000,000 for the International Civilian Mission to Haiti for the period 1 January to 31 March 1994.

In other action, the Assembly urged the international community to increase financial resource flows to Africa and to give serious consideration to convening an international conference on Africa's external indebtedness. Without a vote, it urged States to devote 0.7 per cent of gross national product to official development assistance and 0.15 per cent to the least developed countries. The Assembly urged multilateral financial institutions, as well as recipient and donor countries, to pay special attention to addressing the social impact of structural adjustment policies. It also urged United Nations bodies to integrate the priorities of the New Agenda for African Development in the 1990s in their mandates and to allocate sufficient technical and financial support to African regional economic groupings.

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Annual contributions to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have surpassed $1 billion for the second year in a row. The Fund Raising Service of the UNHCR reported that the $1 billion total was reached on Wednesday, with new contributions from Japan, Denmark and the United States. It said the organization's ability to raise that amount in two successive years reflected both donor confidence in the UNHCR as well as growing world-wide refugee problems.

The High Commissioner, Sadako Ogata, recently thanked donors for their strong support, noting that the UNHCR has "never before been so extensively involved in refugee and humanitarian action around the world". It is currently caring for more than 19 million refugees around the world, with a staff of just under 3,000 people working in 111 countries.

The leading contributors to the UNHCR for 1993 are again the United States, with $215 million during the year, and the European Community, with nearly $160 million. Japan is the third largest donor, with $101 million. The Netherlands, which ranks fourth with $88 million, nearly doubled its contributions over 1992. Other leading contributors are Sweden, the United Kingdom, France, Norway, Germany, Italy, Finland and Australia.

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United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

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WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General is back in New York following trip to East Asia; on final day in China, he met with Vice-Premier and Foreign Minister Qian Qichen; Minister says Secretary-General's visit to Korean peninsula played positive role.

+ Department of Public Information announces publication of 46th volume of Yearbook of the United Nations, covering activities of United Nations system in 1992.

+ Framework Convention on Conservation of Biological Diversity becomes international law today, less than 18 months after signing at Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro; treaty commits nations to protect plant and animal diversity and to use -- and share -- organic resources sustainably.

+ Despite isolated attacks, United Nations personnel report relative calm in Sarajevo and other parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina; in United Nations Protected Areas in Croatia, Christmas Truce is being observed by both sides.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali is back in New York following his ten-day visit to East Asia. On Monday, the last day of his visit to China, he met for an hour and a half with Vice-Premier and Foreign Minister Qian Qichen. The Secretary-General reviewed for the Minister his recent discussions in the Republic of Korea (ROK) and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (ROK). Among the areas covered were the various attitudes towards current negotiations between the DPRK and the United States, the DPRK and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAIEA), and between the two States themselves. The Secretary-General had stressed the importance of continuing all of these negotiating tracks.

The Minister stated that the Secretary-General's visit to the area had played a positive and useful role and said he agreed fully that it was essential that the negotiations continue. They talked about Cambodia, and the Secretary-General thanked the Minister for China's support for the United

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Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), as well as for the military observers China had provided for other peace-keeping operations. They also discussed the proposals for reforming the United Nations, including the composition of the Security Council.

The Secretary-General reviewed with the Minister the upcoming International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development and the World Conference on Women, which China is to host in 1995.

* * *

The Department of Public Information announced the publication yesterday of the 46th volume of the Yearbook of the United Nations, covering the activities of the United Nations system in 1992. This is the current edition, published within 12 months following the calendar year covered.

The Yearbook is the single most comprehensive and authoritative publication covering the work of the Organization. It is designed not just for use by diplomats, government officials and scholars, but also by writers, journalists, teachers and students who seek readily available current information about the United Nations. Its 56 chapters cover political and security questions, regional questions, economic and social questions, trusteeship and decolonization, legal questions, administrative and budgetary questions and intergovernmental organizations related to the United Nations.

The 1,277-page volume records the important milestones in international relations, including the first-ever summit meeting, in January 1992, of the Security Council at the level of Heads of State and Government, and the conclusion by the Conference on Disarmament, after two decades of negotiations, of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. It also provides detailed accounts of the expanding and crucial role played by the United Nations in the efforts to help settle regional conflicts, for instance those in the Middle East, the former Yugoslavia and South Africa.

* * *

The Framework Convention on the Conservation of Biological Diversity becomes international law today, less than 18 months after its signing at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. In the face of rapid extinction of species as a result of human activities, the treaty commits nations to protect biological diversity -- ecosystems and genetic resources, as well as species. It pledges parties to use sustainably the world's plants, animals and all other organisms, and seeks to ensure the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits that result from the use of genetic resources, particularly for developing countries.

The importance of biodiversity is evident in all facets of our lives: More than a quarter of all prescriptions in modern Western medicine contain active ingredients extracted from wild plants, and in countries like Canada

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every variety of wheat contains genes introduced from as many as 14 other countries. The planet's food supply depends on diversity -- the genetic uniformity of some crops has allowed pests to sweep across countries, causing crippling damage and, at times, enormous loss of life.

The ratification that brought the Convention into force was Mongolia's, on 30 September. Today -- 90 days later -- the treaty becomes a binding legal document for the countries that have ratified it -- 37 to date. By mid-December, 167 States had signed the Convention and many of those are now in the process of securing ratification, including the United States and countries of the European Union. The first meeting of Governments that have ratified the Convention (the first Conference of Parties) is tentatively scheduled for 28 November to 9 December next year. Under the treaty, countries promise to develop national plans for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and also to enact laws to protect threatened species and habitats and expand natural protected areas.

* * *

Despite ongoing gunfire in parts of Sarajevo today, United Nations personnel in the beseiged city reported that the situation there was less tense than usual. They attributed that to the successful evacuation this week of a number of civilians. Aside from isolated attacks, it was quiet also in other parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in the United Nations Protected Areas (UNPAs) in Croatia, where a Christmas Truce was being honoured by both sides.

However, attacks on United Nations personnel, installations and equipment continued. Two United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) Military Police vehicles were caught in heavy machine-gun fire yesterday afternoon at a Bosnian Army checkpoint on the road between Visoko and Kiseljak. The Bosnian Army and Bosnian Croat forces were trading fire in the vicinity at the time. Two Canadian Battalion vehicles dispatched to the area were able to evacuate the Military Police officers and there were no United Nations casualties. On Christmas Eve, as the so-called Christmas Truce was beginning, a French Battalion soldier was wounded when mortar rounds impacted near his light tank. Yesterday, United Nations military observers in Kakanj had the windscreen of their vehicle smashed when a child threw a rock at them.

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United Nations

Daily Highlights

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THURSDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Mother Teresa, in special New Year's message for UNICEF, appeals to world leaders to ensure well-being of children by giving highest priority to their health, nutrition, education and security.

+ ESCAP's 1993 Review of Economic Performance and Prospects reports combined output of economies of South and East Asia grew by almost 7 per cent this year, while world economy grew by only 1 per cent.

+ World Food Programme bolsters Mozambican agriculture through massive local purchases of emergency aid supplies -- $7 million worth of maize and beans in 1992 and 1993; expects to spend that amount again locally in next four months.

+ UNOSOM II spokesman says negotiations on de-mining projects are underway with interested Somali firms and authorities; stresses that contracts will only be awarded to those with necessary expertise.

* * *

World-acclaimed champion of those in need, Mother Teresa, has appealed to world leaders to ensure the well-being of children by giving the highest priority to providing for their health, nutrition, education and security. In a special New Year's message recorded in Calcutta for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and globally released today, she said, "We who are adults must ask ourselves: What is the use of anything we do, if it does not help children?"

Mother Teresa emphasized that world leaders "must recognize what the future demands of us". She said: "Our children depend on us for everything -- their health, their nutrition, their education, their security, their well-being, and their happiness, their coming to know, and to love God. For all of this they look to us with trust and hope, and expectation."

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"It is my prayer for every nation on earth," she continued, "that their leaders will never forget this. May they always be mindful of the dignity and beauty of every child, and strive to protect and help each one in every way possible."

* * *

Recent United Nations studies show that, while the world economy grew only by 1 per cent in 1993, the economies of South and East Asia retained their dynamism and performed markedly better than those in other regions. According to a study soon to be released by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), 1993 Review of Economic Performance and Prospects, the combined output of the region's developing economies grew by 6.9 per cent this year.

Several factors account for this continued strength. Despite the general slow-down in the volume of world trade, most developing countries in the region were able to maintain or increase the level of their exports, due in part to a growing intra-regional trade. Substantial capital inflow, sustained domestic demand and a favourable policy environment also fuelled economic performance. South Asian countries, also characterized by their huge populations, have begun to reap the benefits of economic reform programmes undertaken in the previous years. The combined GDP growth of Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka has been estimated to be 4.9 per cent in 1993 and policies aimed at stabilization and structural adjustment should allow the economies of both Bangladesh and Pakistan to grow by more than 5 per cent in 1994.

The most striking performance cited in the report was again that of the Chinese economy, with an estimated gross domestic product (GDP) growth of 13.2 per cent in 1993. By any statistical measure, China has achieved tremendous economic success over the last decade; gross national product (GNP) per capita has nearly tripled.

* * *

The World Food Programme (WFP) office in Mozambique reports that through massive local purchasing of food, it has been able to help bolster the country's food security. The Programme said yesterday that in 1992 and 1993, it bought about $7 million tonnes of maize and beans in the country, and it plans to spend roughly the same amount there in the next four months.

The commodities are brought from local associations, producers and traders, and the WFP insists that traders guarantee farmers a fair price. The food is stored by the WFP in its warehouses, to be distributed during the lean season as emergency aid to displaced people and returnees in the same areas, thus, cutting transport costs.

Local maize production during 1993, the first year of peace, has been estimated at 533,000 tonnes, four times the yield in 1992. Although still far below the country's potential and needs, this is the first significant

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improvement in years, and an indication of the speed with which this sector may grow. FAO's Director of Operations, Phillip Clarke, says, "With good rains and continuing peace, Mozambique is on its way to recovery, but it needs to build a solid food security safety net."

* * *

A spokesman for the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) reported today that preliminary negotiations on de-mining projects were being held with various Somali groups, among them a company in the Garbahary-Luuq area, and with private firms or authorities in Sablaale, North Mogadishu, Galkayo and Belet Weyne. The spokesman said it was hoped that the de-mining projects would be undertaken by Somalis themselves. He stressed, however, that UNOSOM II would ensure that prospective de-mining enterprises had the necessary training and expertise before they were awarded any de-mining contracts.

The spokesman reported also that a farm is to be established in the Baidoa region to accomodate former militiamen, under an agreement reached between a UNOSOM II demobilization team and regional and district council officials in Baidoa. He said that a poultry and vegetable cooperative would be started early next year, run by the militiamen themselves. The demobilization team, which included an agronomist, had approved a site for the project.

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